

LOS ANGELES COUNTY VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION

2615 S. GRAND AVE., SUITE 100
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90007



United We Stand



Joseph N. Smith
Director

MINUTES REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, January 12, 2011

Present:

Commissioners

Stephanie Stone, Chair
Bob Archuleta
Dave Culmer
Rudy Garcia
Carvel Gay
Ramon Rodriguez
Steve Rosmarin

Absent:

Commissioners

Mark MacCarley, Vice Chair
Fred Flores

County Department

Military and Veterans Affairs

Colonel Joseph Smith, Director
Tatiana Rosas, Executive Secretary

Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ramon Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. in the absence of Chair Stone and Vice Chair MacCarley. Commissioner Ramon Rodriguez asked the Mr. Ruben Treviso, GI Forum lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Due to a lack of a quorum, only five Commissioners present, the approval of minutes was postponed for later in the meeting.

Roll Call

As noted above.

Chairman's Report

Due to the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair Commissioner Rodriguez decided to forego the Chairman's report.

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Comments from Audience (three minutes each)

Jeanne Bonfilio, Public Information Officer, wished everyone a Happy New Year and thanked the Commission for always welcoming her. She distributed handouts on the Veterans Homes and a fact sheet on the West Los Angeles Home including a benefits overview for the veteran homes. She stated that there are two additional Homes under construction in Redding and Fresno, California.

Ms. Bonfilio informed that she's left flyers before and she brought more to leave in the lobby. She stated that to be eligible an applicant must be 62 years of age or older (or younger if disabled) a resident of California and have served honorably in the military. A Statement of Intent to Apply is available on the Internet at:

www.cdva.ca.gov/Homes/DocAndImages/statementofintentform.pdf or contact GLAVC temporary office at (818) 742-1761 and an application will be mailed to those interested.

Ruben Treviso, Commander of the Metro Chapter, GI Forum stated that the issue he brings forth to the Commission is unemployment. There is a large amount of unemployed Iraqi veterans in California currently 500 Iraq/Afghanistan are homeless here in downtown Los Angeles. There are 14,000 are in community colleges and most of them are unemployed. The real issue is getting jobs for these veterans. Mr. Treviso has proposed that a program to provide the returning veterans with an internship/apprentice program to acquire the necessary skills to be able to get work after coming out of the service. He's asking that Department of Defense (DoD) get involved to allow the active military personnel to spend in a company or corporation and work the time as spent on duty. He stated that he use to have a program on preparing returning veterans learn skills to be able to get jobs and return to the workforce. The program he is trying to establish and coordinate with various companies and veteran organizations would be providing housing assistance and skilled crafts. Mr. Treviso asked that Commission for support in trying to get the DoD involved.

Chair Stone asked for a motion, Commissioner Gay motioned that in once month's time the Commission would return with a letter in support of Mr. Treviso's ideas and plans and if all in favor then he would have a signed letter of support. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Rodriguez and it was approved unanimously.

Commissioner Rodriguez motioned to approve the Minutes of November 10th and it was seconded by Commissioner Garcia and they were approved unanimously.

Volunteers of America – Duffy Leahy

Mr. J. Duffy Leahy, Manager, Helping Veterans Receive Paychecks, Volunteers of America. Helping Veterans Receive Paycheck has been serving veterans for 10 years and the services have always been free. The program has now expanded with an Incarcerated Veteran Program, a new program for female veterans and veterans with families. There is growing awareness of sexual assault but not many women come forward and identify themselves as veterans needing assistance.

Chair Stone expressed her appreciation to all the work done by Volunteers of America. She stated that 1 out of 5 women have reported sexual trauma and the biggest challenge as a society is to identify and help these women who are also veterans.

Mr. Leahy stated that they work in collaboration with the Veterans Affairs. Mr. Worthy (VA) comes out every Friday to fill out forms. He stated that you can't send a homeless person to go 25 miles to get their benefit services. Mr. Leahy stated if they get a referred veteran that needs a job and are homeless they'll make sure that they get seen by the VA.

Chair Stone asked on the process if a veteran is in need of housing after hours. Mr. Leahy stated that the number to call is (213) 624-4357 Program Manager; Antoinette Feliz is there to assist women or families. "We never turn away a veteran," stated Mr. Leahy.

Commissioner Rodriguez asked if Mr. Leahy could return with a success story next month and Mr. Leahy agreed. Chair Stone thanked Mr. Leahy for his presentation and looked forward to his return next month.

VA Long Beach Healthcare System – Alice Martinez

Ms. Alice Martinez, VA Long Beach Healthcare System, stated that Ms. Isabel Duff sends her regards and hopes everyone on the Commission is doing well and would like to come and address the Commission in the near future. Ms. Martinez also invited the Commission to hold a meeting at their location. The following was reported:

- Construction still underway in Long Beach. The Emergency Room is being moved into the new building next month. The Blind Center's new Director is identifying his staff and target date to open is this summer.
- 48,000 vets have accessed the VA Long Beach Healthcare System.
- There have been 56 outreach community events.
- Had a productive year with an \$18 million budget close.
- Will be having a conference call on the status of a Fisher House.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that in early February they can get the primary and start construction in early part of 2012. Commissioner Rodriguez motioned for a support letter that the Veterans Advisory Commission is in support of VA Long Beach Healthcare System getting a Fisher House. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Gay and was passed unanimously.

Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin

Commissioner Steve Rosmarin stated the Home is now housing 22 veterans. There are 2 examples of by laws for the Commission to review. Commissioner Rosmarin asked the Chair to establish a small sub-committee to go over the by laws and provide recommendations at next month's meeting. There is already a list of items that the Home needs and there are several people that can be added to a Donation List for those that would like to make monetary donations. Commissioner Rosmarin stated that the Andersam Foundation has shown a great interest to be a part of the support committee.

Commissioner Rosmarin motioned to form a sub-committee for the Veterans Home Support Committee and review the by laws and make recommendations. Commissioner Archuleta seconded the motion but inquired as to how time involvement would the sub-committee need? Commissioner Rosmarin stated between now and next month's meeting; possibly an hour. Chair Stone requested a fact sheet and time of meeting and items that would be discussed before motion is passed.

Grants available in each of the five Supervisorial Districts

To be discussed at next month's meeting. Staff to send Chair Stone the motion on what Commissioners expected to provide.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report – Colonel Joseph Smith

Chair Stone suggested foregoing the reading of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Department Report in lieu of Colonel Joseph N. Smith, Director's absence and accept the report as written. Secretary Tatiana Rosas provided the additional Department updates on behalf of Colonel Smith:

- All components made or exceeded their quotas.
- Our budget situation is still unstable.
- The BHPH building is finishing up extrication of the contamination; moving ahead slowly.

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- The CVSO conference is scheduled for February 28 through March 4, 2011.

Chair Stone thanked staff for the Department Report.

New Business

Nothing for new business.

Item's for Next Month's Agenda

Grants in the five Districts from each Commissioner

Veterans Home Support Committee – Steve Rosmarin

West Los Angeles Healthcare System – Ralph Tillman

Volunteers of America Success Story – J. Duffy Leahy

Commissioner Archuleta will invite two Veterans for February's meeting to offer the Invocation and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Good of the Order

Commissioner Culmer; stated that the Marine Corps funds a de-stressing program for Marines and former Marines that assists them with emotional and psychological problems.

Commissioner Rosmarin; stated that during Christmas the Jewish War Veterans gave out 619 gifts to the patients at Sepulveda. Commissioner Rosmarin extended an invitation for everyone to take a tour of the Home and see first hand the great work being done. The National Commander of the American Legion visited and toured the Home in December.

Commissioner Archuleta; stated, "Happy New Year and Welcome Back to the veterans that are coming home." His son Captain Brandon Archuleta will be returning from Afghanistan with a second Bronze Star and Matthew graduates in June from West Point and will be going to Ranger School and attending jump school. He appreciated what his sons' service to the country and thanked those at the VA hospital for all they do.

Commissioner Garcia; concurred with Commissioner Archuleta. He stated that last month he celebrated his birthday and 56th wedding anniversary.

Commissioner Gay; stated that he and his wife did a Christmas party at Los Alamitos and had Santa pay a visit on a fire engine; everyone especially the children had a great time. His son-in-law was home for 3 months and has returned to Afghanistan. His daughter is enrolling at USC for doctorate school.

Commissioner Rodriguez; "Again, Happy New Year!" He introduced Mr. Jack Edwards, Executive Director, Am Vets and his new boss.

Chair Stone; apologized being here earlier. She stated that last month's meeting at the Lancaster Home was cancelled due to bad weather and lack of coordination. "We need to be aware of our schedules....I want a commitment to our community and to hear from more members."

Chair Stone wished everyone, "Happy New and a prosperous year." She thanked everyone for attending and those that are still serving she thanks them for their service.

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Motion to adjourn meeting by Commissioner Rodriguez and seconded by Commissioner Archuleta. Chair Stone adjourned meeting at 3:08 p.m.

Tatiana Rosas
Executive Secretary
January 12, 2011

Note: The next Commission meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. in Suite 100 at the Department of Public Social Services site at 2615 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA.